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AN

# APPENDIX

TO AN

ADDRESS,

LATELY PUBLISHED,

TO THE

*Inhabitants of Nottingham,*

ON THE SUBJECT

OF THE

**TEST-LAWS:**

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BY THE AUTHOR OF THE ADDRESS.

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*This I confess, that after the Way, which they call Heresy, so  
worship I the God of my Fathers. ACTS xxiv. 14.*

*By Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report; as  
Deceivers, and yet true. 2 COR. vi. 8.*

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NOTTINGHAM,

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AN

# ADDRESS

TO THE

INHABITANTS of NOTTINGHAM:

OCCASIONED

BY A LETTER

LATELY SENT TO THE

**MAYOR,**

AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE

**CORPORATION**

OF THAT TOWN.

By GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B.A.

And late FELLOW of JESUS COLLEGE, Cambridge.



## An Appendix, &c.

**SINCE** the Publication of my late *Address* to the Inhabitants of Nottingham, some Observations have occurred to me, either from my own Reflections or the Conversation of others, which, as they may contribute to an Enforcement and Illustration of the Argument in Question, may rectify some Misconstructions, and excite further Attention to Subjects little considered and less understood, but most interesting to every Member of Society, as a *rational Creature*, as an *Englishman*, and as a *Christian*; I shall, without further Preface, communicate to my Fellow-Citizens, whose Information alone has been my Object in this Business.

One of the *Junior-Council*, whom I need not specify by Name upon premising, that he possesses an Acuteness of Understanding and a Degree of Information, worthy of a better Cause, entered one Day into an amicable Debate with me upon the Subject of my *Address*; a Debate, highly honourable to him after the unceremonious Manner, in which I had criticised and censured his Con-



duct. I will exhibit the Substance of our Conversation with all the Fidelity, of which Candour and Memory are capable: for I am not sure, that I had always a clear Apprehension of his Meaning, and should be extremely sorry for any Misrepresentation of it to his Disadvantage.

1. Though *Blackstone* expressly declares “ the Corporation and Test-Acts to be the two Bulwarks erected to secure the established Church against Perils from Non-conformists of all Denominations,” and I could not conceive that a different Idea was entertained by any Person whatsoever of their Object, my Opponent thought it an Error in me to view these Acts in any other Light, than as a Security to the State. This Notion is, I think, wholly false: and, I am sure, vain and frivolous.

Our Constitution is composed of a Church and a State. Now Government, I presume, means to secure the State by the Oaths of Abjuration, Allegiance, and Supremacy; and the Church, by a Compliance with that Ceremony, which implies Communion with her Worship. Is not this a natural and intelligible Discrimination? If so, what more erroneous than the Objection before us?

But, when the State has secured herself by these Oaths of Abjuration, Allegiance, and Supremacy, why enjoin an additional Test on her Members, but with a View to the Security of her Ally the Church, by the Intervention of a religious Ceremony? Surely it were superfluous and unnecessary.



To pretend, therefore, that this Act of enjoining the *Lord's Supper* on *civil Officers and Magistrates* is merely with a View to the *State*, which at the same Time cannot be separated from the *Church*, is a most idle Distinction without a Difference; a mere verbal Allegation, or to me perfectly unintelligible.

Indeed, the very Notion of a Constitution compounded of a *Church*, (that is, a System of religious Faith and Worship, erected on a *private Interpretation* of the Scriptures) and a *State*, is in Reality a Begging of the Question; and presupposes that Power of religious Jurisdiction, which I totally disallow, and for which no Government under Heaven can produce me its Authority.

2. My Opponent was also of Opinion, that the *Test* of the *Lord's Supper* ought to be regarded as a merely *political Act*. It is employed, to be sure, by the *civil Magistrate* for his own wordly Purposes; but let any Man *assert*, or rather *believe*, if he can, that an Institution ordained by *Christ* himself for a Commemoration of his own Death—an Institution peculiarly *religious*, and as distinct from every Thing *political* as the *twelve Apostles* of *Nazareth* from the *six Junior-Council* of *Nottingham*:—let any Man, I say, consider this Institution as a mere *political Ordinance*, if he can.

3. But “the supreme Power in a State has a Right to impose what *Tests* it pleases upon the Subject.” To which I answer: If it can be proved, that the *Conscience* of a Man, under the

Perception of moral and religious Truth, is, or can be, cognizable by human Authority, or that God is not *exclusively* concerned in this Matter, as *the Searcher of the Heart*; then may this Omnipotence of the *Magistrate* be justifiably maintained and exerted. Otherwise, he must not only have the *Power* of effecting what is *impracticable*, but the *Right* also of doing *Wrong*; which is absurd enough.

Our *Junior-Council*, who profess an Intention of executing the *qualifying Laws for Offices, upon public Ground—in Defence of the Constitution of their Country*—might have known, that there are Duties, owed by us to God and to ourselves, antecedent and superiour to all *civil Power* upon Earth; and that those Injunctions of *civil Magistrates*, which contradict any explicit Doctrine of Morality, are from the first, to all Purposes and in every Sense, NULL and VOID. The Rule of Conduct in this Case for good *Christians* and honest Men is plain and obvious. What *Socrates* said to the *Athenians*, when they required him not to confute and expose the *established Superstitions* of his Country;—what *Peter* and *John* replied to the *Jewish Magistrates*, when *commanded by them not to teach in the Name of Jesus\**;—that Answer must be made by every resolute and upright Citizen, when a *Test*, inconsistent with the Prerogative of God and the Liberty of Conscience, is enjoined upon him by the Legislature of his Country: “It is better to obey God than Man.”

\* Acts iv. 18.

Besides, that Opinion of the Authority of a *Magistrate* to require what *Test* of Obedience he may please, is, in another Respect, pregnant with Wickedness and Absurdity. By this Rule of *Power* giving *Right*, the *Protestant*, the *Popish*, the *Mahometan*, the *Idolatrous Magistrate*, is authorised to establish that Form of Religion, which they severally prefer; and consequently the Worship of *Images*, or of *three Gods* instead of *one*, may be lawfully enjoined on their respective Subjects: or, in other Words, the *Magistrate* has a Right to oppose and counteract all the Aims of the Divine Administration in the different Dispensations of Religion for the Reformation of Mankind since the Foundation of the World. A delightful Exercise indeed of the *Magistrate's* Authority! Now what is the clear Inference from this? What, but that the *Magistrate* has no Power at all over Religion and the Conscience?

4. "But the *Magistrate* is guilty of no Injustice: he *compels* no Man to comply."—It is surprising, how some People can impose upon themselves with mere *Words* destitute of Meaning! Compel? Why, no; he does not *compel* me à *Coup de Baton*, with a *Cudgel* in his Hand. But is there no *Compulsion* but in a *Cat-o-nine Tails*? If he lays such Temptations in my Way, as Experience proves to be in general too powerful for the Integrity and Magnanimity of human Nature, he as effectually *compels* me, in all Propriety of Speech, as by an Act of *Violence*. Nay, more effectually: for Numbers are overcome by these gentle Seductions of worldly Interest, whose generous



Spirits would have been roused at once to Resistance by a tyrannical Effort of Authority. To talk, therefore, of *Non-Compulsion* in this Case, is a mere verbal Sophistry, and an Insult to Common-Sense.

Suppose, however, merely as a Work of *Supererogation*, we expose by a particular Example this capital Argument of *Compulsion*: to which I feel the greater Inclination, as it affords me an Opportunity of illustrating a Passage of the *New-Testament*.

When those who had been invited to partake of the Supper in the Parable\*, refused to attend, the Master sent his Servants into the High-Ways to COMPEL all, whom they found, to come in, that the House might be filled.

Now what is the Purport of this Relation? Why truly, that the *Jews* would reject the Gospel, but that its Evidences would be received by the *Gentiles*; and act upon their Minds with such *Efficacy* as might be justly said to COMPEL them to receive it. And will any reasonable Person find Fault with this sensible Use of the Word COM-PULSION; because the *Gentiles* were not CUDGEL-ED into an Acceptance of *Christianity*? Away with these *Test-Laws*, say I, if they can be defended with no better Arguments than such pitiful Quirks as this!

\* Luke xiv. 16-25.

5. "But, if every Man were left to his own Discretion in religious Matters, universal *Confusion* would ensue."—A mere *Bugbear* to frighten old Women and Children! The Fear of *Confusion* is the stale Pretence of religious and political Bigots of all Denominations, to oppose and decry Reforms of every Kind whatever, which will always, notwithstanding, be going on in Spite of Bigotry, as long as the World endures. But I answer: No Matter what ensues. If the Principles of your *Test-Laws* be wrong and indefensible, they ought to be abandoned. Who is not acquainted with this essential and universal Maxim of Morality—"Never do *Evil* that *Good* may come?" Let Man act uprightly, in Conformity to the Dictates of Reason and Religion; and trust *Consequences* to the Providence of God, who does not wish his Schemes to be promoted by Folly and Injustice, and the Violation of his own Laws. But it is not likely, that any bad *Consequences* would ensue from a complete Enjoyment of *Christian Liberty*. It is a Satire upon the supreme Being to suppose it. On the contrary, Nothing else, but this unwarrantable Imposition of one Man's Opinions upon another, has been the Cause of all those terrible Persecutions, and Imprisonments, and Assassinations, and Martyrdoms, and Massacres, which are related in every Page of the ecclesiastical Historian, but alas! in vain, for the Admonition of Mankind.

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In the mean Time, we will allow, for the Sake of Argument, that *Confusion*, as the Phrase is, would arise from this Liberty of Conscience, for which I declare myself an unreserved Advocate. Who is there so inexperienced as not to know, that some previous Fermentation in human Affairs is necessary to their Refinement? *Peace* is indeed a Possession of great Value, but would be dearly purchased at the Expence of *Truth* and *Liberty*. Nay, that *Peace* seems to be but spurious and imperfect, which is not the Offspring of *Confusion*. To *Confusion* we are indebted for the greatest Blessings of Life, and the noblest Enjoyments of our Nature. What but *Confusion* preserves the Waters of the Ocean from Putrefaction, and the Atmosphere from Pestilence? To what Cause must we ascribe the Establishment of *British* Liberty, and the Security of those Privileges, which have rendered us the Praise and Envy of the Earth? To *Confusion*.—Even the Propagation of the blessed Gospel was impracticable without *Confusion*. The Apostles excited a *Hue and Cry*, wherever they went *These*, said the *Jews*, *that have TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, are come hither also*\*. No Man of Sense will suffer himself to be abused by the base Coin of *evil Words*, maliciously circulated to discredit *good Things*, and issued from the Mint of timid and lazy Men to run down the sterling Gold of Adventurers more resolute and active than themselves.

\* Acts xvii. 6.



The Truth is, our *civil Governors*, by no Means overburdened with Religion themselves, care not one Farthing about this or that System of it; and only prize it as a political Engine to serve their own vile Purposes of Interest or Ambition. Magistrates of all Times are alike. As it was *eighteen hundred Years* ago, so it is now. *Gallio careth for none of these Things\**. They heartily detest Reformers and Reformation: and stand up for the established System with a Zeal and Satisfaction exactly proportionate to the Absurdity and Corruptions of it. *For every one, that doeth Evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reproved†.*

So far my Reflexions have been regulated by the Debate betwixt my Opponent and myself. I now pass on to some Observations unconnected with it.

AS I should be wonderfully gratified by seeing an Engagement between two great Armies, if I were not necessary to it, though I take no Delight in Blood and Slaughter, and would not wish my Fellow-Creatures by any Means to knock each other on the Head for my Satisfaction and Amusement only; so I rejoice in this Measure of our *Junior-Council*, though I lament the Illiberality which gave it Birth. I sincerely hope, that those Members of our Corporation, who have not qualified for their Offices, will have the Spirit to ad-

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\* Acts xviii. 17. † John iii. 20.

here to their Purpose, that we may see, whether a *Court of Justice* will countenance such a Prosecution, and venture in these enlightened Times to put these contemptible Laws in Execution. Indeed, we have good Reason to hope a favourable Issue to the next Application of the *Dissenters* to the *House of Commons*, when we consider the gradual Disposition of that best Part of our Legislature to listen to their Petition. *Lord North* it is true, tho' he would fain persuade us of his friendly Regard for Liberty and Toleration, still opposes their Claims with a Narrowness of Spirit, seldom associated with so many Accomplishments and such an amiable Form of Mind; and *Mr. Pitt*, who seems more bent on the Retention of his Place, than the Imitation of his Father's Virtues, exerts himself in the same Cause with unrelenting Stubbornness: but we fondly hope, that the popular and manly Eloquence of *Mr. Fox* will more than counterbalance the Authority of the Nobleman and the crafty Policy of the Minister. We are not quite so sanguine in our Expectations from the *House of Lords*. Though many of the present *Bishops* have shewn themselves highly respectable both for their Learning and Liberality, yet the *Episcopal Bench* in general is adverse to civil and religious Reforms: and, in my Opinion, these *spiritual Guides*, would be much better employed, and more suitably to their *evangelical* Function, in acquainting themselves with their Clergy, in patronising modest Merit, which is starving on Curacies and pitiful Preferments, and in promoting good Manners in their several Dioceses, than in obsequious Attend-

ance on a Court, and in the Turbulence of political Ambition. Certainly our *Bishops* might vote for a complete Extension of religious Freedom in *England* with as good a Grace, in the Capacity of *Protestant Prelates*, as for the Establishment of *Popery* at *Quebec*.

If, however, there be any one *Truth* undeniably evident upon the clearest Principles of *Reason*, *Christianity*, and sound *Policy*, in my Judgement it is this: That the *Magistrate* has no Authority in religious Concerns, and that every peaceable and conscientious Subject should be left at Liberty to serve God in his own Way, unembarrassed by civil Disabilities and Discouragements. But there never was yet any Proposition in Politics and Morals, how plain soever, which ingenious and disputatious Men might not controvert and puzzle to Eternity. All that remains, therefore, for the Advocates of Truth, is, to confirm our Sentiments with the best Arguments in our Power, and to place them in the most advantageous Light; then to leave them to the dispassionate Consideration of our Readers, to be accepted, or rejected, according to the Impression made upon their own Minds. This is certain: *Truth* will gradually dispel the Shades of Error, and break through every Cloud, with which Prejudice, and Policy, and Priest-Craft, may obstruct her Radiance. She is that *shining Light*, which will shine more and more unto perfect Day.

Besides, one Fact no Man can deny; extremely worthy of Observation, and infinitely



consolatory to the Mind. It is this. A Dissatisfaction with some of the capital Doctrines of the *Church of England*, and juster Notions of civil and religious Liberty, have been long and rapidly gaining Ground both among the *established Clergy* themselves, and every other Denomination of *Christians*. Come forward, ye Sons of Bigotry and Intolerance! and produce me that Error, which has been propagated and confirmed in Proportion to the Improvement of the human Faculties, and the Advancement of Philosophy and Science. If every *Clergyman*, who disapproves and disbelieves such Doctrines as that of a *Trinity in Unity, three Gods in one*, would have a Resolution to avow his Sentiments and relinquish his Station in the *Church, the Establishment* would find herself deprived of more learned and respectable Members, than she would previously have imagined, or could well spare. But God has not given to every Man, any more than to *Erasmus*, the Spirit of *Martyrdom*; and may he, *who knows that we are but Dust*, make every Allowance for the Infirmities of his Creatures in *that Day! His Kingdom cometh not with Observation\**; but is daily establishing by imperceptible Operations, inconceivable and unknown to us. How far distant a more perfect Society amongst ourselves may be, no Man can tell. But the Transactions of a neighbouring Country will not suffer the most gloomy Imagination to Despair.

\* Luke xvii. 20.

BUT let no one conclude, as some are inclined to do, that, whilst I condemn *ecclesiastical Dominion* in Connection with the present *Church-Establishment*, I could wish it transferred to the *Dissenters*. No: I contend for an *absolute and universal Abolition* of this usurped Authority over the Consciences of Men, whatever the religious Creed of the Supreme Power may be; and plead for the Sovereignty of God alone in his own Kingdom. The *Dissenters*, it is true, of one Denomination in particular, (and few Men have enjoyed more Opportunities of knowing both *Churchmen* and them than myself) if we consider the Disadvantages of Education, under which they comparatively labour, have at least equalled their Brethren of the *Establishment* in almost every Branch of Literature, and in enlarged Conceptions of *religious and civil Liberty* are, in general, greatly their *Superiors*. But the *Dissenters* compose a Mass of very dissimilar Materials, and, at the best, have the Infirmities of other Men; and it may reasonably be doubted, whether *they*, as a Body, would make such a temperate Use of Power, or display, upon the whole, such Moderation, as the *Church of England*. And, tho' I so much dislike many Parts of the public Service of our *Church*, I find myself unable, at the same Time, to look with any Approbation upon the Mode of conducting public Worship in *dissenting Congregations*: and, considering their Situation as *Protestant-Dissenters*, and their Liberty to model their religious Services, as they think fit, divested of all those Impediments, which clog an *Establishment*; I cannot but regard their Con-

duct as exceedingly reprehensible and inconsistent; in neglecting those Advantages, that would accrue from a liberal Use of their *Christian* Privileges, and from the Introduction of a corrected Version of the Scriptures: for without this Measure, *the Poor*, to whom *the Gospel* was particularly *preached*\*, that is, all the *unlearned* Part of Society, must still continue in Error with Respect to some essential Articles of *Christianity*, and under a superstitious Credulity to the Dictates of *blind Guides*†.

Some of my Readers have been dissatisfied, and some have taken great Offence, at the Conclusion of that Part of my *Address* beginning in p. 16. with the Words—*But what*—and ending in p. 17. with the Words—*and Folly*. It is hardly worth While to explain one's-self to those, who will not exercise their own Discernment in forming a just Estimate of the Spirit and Purport of a Passage: nor can it reasonably be expected of us Authors, that we should add to the Hardships of our sorry Occupation, by finding *Understandings*, as well as *Arguments*, for our Readers. Seriously, however, after a repeated, and, I trust, dispassionate Consideration of these Clauses, so exceptionable as it should seem, I feel no Inclination to qualify or retract them.

\* Matt. xi. 5. † Matt. xxiii. 16.



i. It ought to be observed, that I merely exercise a Right, which every Man may assert to himself, of delivering *my own Opinion* upon the *Proposition* as stated by myself, without any *personal* Asperities whatsoever. Will it not be granted me, that *Practices* may be stigmatised with every Energy of Language by a Mind totally uninfected with the Distemper of *Malevolence*? Can we forget that *the Prince of Peace*, the meek and lowly Saviour of Mankind, poured forth all the Severities of indignant Expression upon the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and again and again pronounced them *Fools* and *Hypocrites*? I know and respect many Individuals, who constantly acquiesce in what is criminal in itself, without Criminality. *St. Paul* was a *Blasphemer* and a *Persecutor*, but he obtained *Mercy*, because he did it ignorantly, or rather unwarily, in *Unbelief*\*. A Man may become a *Murderer* by depriving a Fellow-Creature of his Life, without bringing the Sin of *Blood-Guiltiness* upon himself. I could easily mention, for Instance, if it were not an invidious Distinction, several of the *established Clergy* of this Town, who are deservedly esteemed, both for their Liberality of Manners, untainted by that Bigotry of Soul, which feels no Affection but for those of their own Communion; and for their other Virtues, whom, nevertheless, I am compelled to regard as *practical Blasphemers*; if it be, as I apprehend it is, a *Blasphemy* of the most enormous

\* 1 Tim. i. 13.

Size, to dethrone the unutterable Perfections of *Jehovah* from the *Heaven of Heavens* to the *Tabernacle* of a *human Body*, and to exalt a mere *Man* to the *Divinity*; nay, not a *Man* only, but a *Non-Entity*; making, against all Propriety of Speech, all Philosophy, all Common-Sense, the *Spirit of God* a distinct *Person* from *God himself*.

2. Many have connected frightful Ideas with the Word *Blasphemy*, without Authority. Ignorance sees through a Mist, and of Course the Object is magnified to the Eyes of her Imagination. The true Meaning of *Blasphemy* is simply *Evil-Speaking*; and this is one Instance among many, of the Imperfection of our present Translation of the Scriptures, which misleads the Unlearned by the Use of unintelligible Terms. The *Scribes* charged *Jesus* with speaking *Blasphemies*\* for exercising, by Virtue of his divine Commission, God's Prerogative of *forgiving Sins*: conceiving this Conduct to be an actual *Reviling* of the Deity, by usurping to himself this high Privilege of the Almighty. Exactly after the same Manner do they *blaspheme* the *Creator*, who ascribe *his* Perfections to a *Creature*.

3. It is only by a lively and glowing Representation of these irrational and unscriptural Persuasions in their true Colours, that inattentive Minds can be induced to reflect upon the Singularity of their Articles of Faith, and the Professors of the Truth be more firmly established in *sound Doctrine*.

\* Mark ii. 7.

Tame and insipid Language is a Kind of *High-Treason* against the Majesty of the *royal Law*\*, and is but too often a Proof of the Writer's Indifference to the most sublime and important Doctrines. Give me the Magnanimity of a *Luther*, wrapped up in the Rectitude of his Intentions, and keeping the Tenour of his Way, undismayed by the fiery Zeal of his Enemies and the Coldness of his Friends, in Preference to a thousand such Men as *Erasmus* and *Melancthon*, with their temporising Expedients and mean Concessions. *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, BECAUSE THOU ART LUKE-WARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my Mouth†.*

I HAVE remarked before, that this Sort of tyrannising over the Consciences of Mankind has been the Parent of Enormities as cruel and flagitious, as have sprung from any other infernal Principle whatever, which has ravaged Society in any Period, and extinguished the Blessings of human Life. And, I am clear, that, as far as Analogy, and History, and Experience will authorise this Conclusion (and beyond their Authority we can have no Right to form *any* Conclusions at all): I am clear, I say, in this, that the same Ill-liberality and Intolerance, which countenance and approve the iniquitous Oppression of the *Test-Laws*, or any similar Instance of Persecution,

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\* James ii. 8. † Rev. iii. 15. 16.



would, in no long Time and by no very gentle Progress, be brought to exercise upon their *dissenting* Brethren even the Horrors of the *Popish Inquisition*, if the Mildness of our Government and the Temper of the Times would give Scope to their Dispositions. Yes: many a demure Hypocrite, who fancies himself, with the Reader's Leave, a true Disciple of the benevolent *Jesus*, would *roast* my *Body* for the Edification of my *Soul*, on the Score of my *Address* and this *Appendix*, as rendering thereby a most acceptable Service to the merciful Father of the human Race. I am conscious, however, and willingly acknowledge, that some Exception in Favour of *Individuals* should be made to this general Position. The *Effect* of vicious Principles is not always proportionate to their evil *Tendency*. They are, in many Cases, checked in their Operations, and even entirely repressed, by the countervailing Influence of superiour Good-Sense and native Sensibility of Heart. But no Man, however mild and generous his Dispositions, can answer for the Lengths, to which he might be carried, with Opportunities of indulging the Obliquities of his Understanding. Like *Hazael*, with Affections yet uncorrupted, he would be shocked at the Prospect of those Enormities, which would soon become habitual to his Feelings, and be daily practised without one single Sensation of Remorse. Of such infinite Importance to Society and ourselves, is the imbibing of just Sentiments, and a rational Rule of Life, undepraved by furious Zeal or gloomy Superstition!

AND here I shall take Leave of my Reader and the Subject, unless some Antagonist, either in Behalf of the political or religious Constitution of his Country, which are thought to be *founded in such Wisdom*, should feel himself disposed to enter the Lists against me for a free Discussion of the Points in Question; and should exhibit his *real Name*.— If but one Individual has been induced by any Thing advanced in these *Pamphlets* to review and rectify a single Principle of his Conduct, I shall think my Time in writing them very happily laid out. Indeed, these dull Topics of Religion and Morality are not calculated, I am well aware, to interest the *Bulk* of Mankind, whether *the great Vulgar* or the *small*. Mere animal Existences! with Souls barely sufficient to keep their Bodies from Putrefaction, they jog on the High-Road of *Sense*, unseduced either to the right Hand, or to the left, by these unprofitable Speculations; *one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise*.

NOTTINGHAM, Nov. 10th, 1789.



*M<sup>r</sup>. Smith gave up the Office.*

